International Seabed Authority ISBA/8/A/13

Assembly

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Eighth session
Kingston, Jamaica
5-16 August 2002

Statement of the President on the work of the Assembly at the eighth session

1. The eighth session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held at Kingston, Jamaica, from 5 to 16 August 2002.

Adoption of the agenda

2. At its 82nd meeting, on 5 August 2002, the Assembly adopted its agenda for the eighth session (ISBA/8/A/2).

Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

3. At the 82nd meeting, on 5 August 2002, Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) was elected President of the Assembly for 2002. Subsequently, following consultations in the regional groups, the representatives of Argentina (Latin American and Caribbean Group), Slovakia (Eastern European Group), China (Asian Group) and Australia (Western European and Others Group) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Appointment of the Credentials Committee

4. The Assembly elected a Credentials Committee in accordance with rule 24 of its Rules of Procedure. The following were elected as members of the Credentials Committee: Brazil, Jamaica, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Poland, Senegal, South Africa and Sweden. Subsequently, Prof. Ryszard Kotliński (Poland) was elected by the Committee as its Chairman. The Committee met on 14 August 2002. The report of the Committee is contained in document ISBA/8/A/8. At the 85th meeting, on 15 August 2002, the Assembly adopted the report of the Credentials Committee. The decision of the Assembly relating to credentials is contained in document ISBA/8/A/9.

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Election to fill a vacancy on the Finance Committee

5. At the 82nd meeting, on 5 August 2002, Mr. Michael Wood (United Kingdom) was elected to fill the vacancy on the Finance Committee left by the resignation of Mr. Paul McKeil (United Kingdom).

Tribute to Elizabeth Mann Borgese

6. At the 83rd meeting, on 9 August 2002, the Assembly paid tribute to the memory of Elizabeth Mann Borgese.

Annual report of the Secretary-General

7. At the 83rd meeting, on 9 August 2002, the Secretary-General introduced his sixth annual report (ISBA/8/A/5 and Add.1), as required by article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Following the presentation by the Secretary-General, statements were made by the delegations of Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, the Sudan, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom. The observer delegation of the United States of America also made a statement.

8. Several delegations emphasized how important it was for all States Parties to the Convention that had not already done so to take the necessary steps to become parties to the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention. The Assembly was informed that Honduras and Kuwait had recently become parties to the Agreement and that Mexico was taking the necessary internal steps to do so. The importance of early entry into force of the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the Authority was also stressed, and several delegations stated that they would soon be in a position to accede to the Protocol.

9. The Assembly expressed its concern over the long delay in completing a supplementary agreement concerning the headquarters of the Authority, but also took note of the information contained in the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General concerning the recent progress that had been made towards resolving the outstanding issues with respect to the Agreement. The Assembly urged the Secretary-General and the Government of Jamaica to continue their efforts to conclude an agreement as soon as possible.

10. The representative of the Republic of Korea noted that the latest information available concerning investment in preparation for and in the conduct of activities in the Area dated back to 1995. In the view of his delegation, it was necessary for the Assembly to be provided with updated information. The representative requested the Secretary-General to study the matter with a view to the Assembly establishing criteria for obtaining and verifying data relating to such investments.

11. The Assembly took note of the increasingly technical emphasis in the substantive work of the Authority. At the same time, several delegations referred to the need to disseminate information to the wider membership of the Authority. In response to a specific request from some delegations, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that a document or report on trends in global metal markets would be prepared. While it was acknowledged that the Authority has no regulatory functions with respect to marine scientific research as such, the Assembly noted that

the Authority has an important role to play with respect to promoting and encouraging marine scientific research in the Area. The Assembly endorsed the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report for the promotion of international cooperation in research projects aimed at enhancing scientific knowledge of the deep ocean environment and its resources.

12. Several delegations welcomed the opportunity to hold a debate on the pattern of meetings of the Authority. The problem of a lack of quorum at meetings of the Assembly in Kingston was acknowledged to be a serious matter that needs to be addressed. It was agreed that there was a need to give more time to meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission, particularly as that body began its consideration of regulations relating to prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. Noting that the Legal and Technical Commission was the body with the greatest workload at present, the Secretary-General was requested to organize the meetings of the various organs of the Authority in the most efficient manner, according to the proposed work plan for each session and bearing in mind the need for flexibility and the existing organic links between the various organs and bodies of the Authority.

Budget of the Authority for the financial period 2003 to 2004

13. The Assembly considered the proposed budget for the Authority for the financial period 2003 to 2004 as contained in the report of the Secretary-General (ISBA/8/A/6-ISBA/8/C/2). In reviewing the proposed budget, the Assembly took into account the recommendations of the Finance Committee as contained in its report of 12 August 2002 (ISBA/8/A/7/Rev.1-ISBA/8/C/3/Rev.1) and the decision and recommendations of the Council relating to the budget of the Authority (ISBA/8/C/5). At its 84th meeting, on 14 August 2002, the Assembly adopted the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2003 to 2004 in the sum of $10,509,700. The Assembly also adopted the scale of assessments for 2003 and 2004 in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Committee. The decision of the Assembly relating to the budget of the Authority and related matters is contained in document ISBA/8/A/11.

Election to fill vacancies on the Council

14. At its 84th meeting, on 14 August 2002, in accordance with article 161, paragraph 3, of the Convention, the Assembly elected the following as members of the Council for a term of four years each, subject to the understandings reached in the regional and interest groups and set out in document ISBA/8/A/10.

Group A: Italy, Russian Federation

Group B: France, Germany

Group C: Australia, Indonesia

Group D: Egypt, Fiji, Jamaica

Group E: Cameroon, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Myanmar, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia.

Official seal, flag and emblem of the International Seabed Authority

15. At its 84th meeting, on 14 August 2002, the Assembly adopted the official seal, flag and emblem of the International Seabed Authority. The decision of the Assembly is contained in document ISBA/8/A/12.

Next meeting of the Assembly

16. The next meeting of the Assembly will be held from 28 July to 8 August 2003. It was noted that the Eastern European Group would, in due course, nominate a candidate for the presidency of the Assembly in 2003, and the Western European and Others Group would nominate a candidate for the presidency of the Council in 2003.